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ABSTRACT

This publication contains exercises recommended for use with adult basic education students in a writing skills program. Journal exercises are suggested as an ice-breaking activity for the beginning writer. Topics are listed for directed journal entries that bridge the gap from free writing to a structured approach. "Power verbs" exercises are provided that improve the use of specific descriptive verbs. Exercises in writing sentences progress from simple sentences to description using sense details to adding information to sentences. Next, exercises are presented that build skills in sentence refinement and paragraph structure and that serve as a good building block for writing process instruction. A variety of exercises follow that help students develop paragraphs. They cover such concepts as sensory descriptions, comparison and contrast, exposition, and self-awareness/self-understanding. Exercises that focus on life skills offer instruction in writing business letters, cover letters, thank you letters for interviews, and complaint letters. Exercises for the writing process include the introduction of transitional expressions, outlining, rough drafts, revision, and editing. Suggested topics for a final workshop composition are provided. Handouts and 58 references are appended. (YLB)

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# "The Writing Wheel"
# A Writing Skills Program for ABE Students

## EXERCISES

Adult Education
Tuscarora Intermediate Unit
Center

Juniata-Mifflin Area
Vocationa-Technical School
Pitt Street
Lewistown, PA 17044

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"The Writing Wheel"
A Writing Skills Program for
ABE Students

EXERCISES

from our Writing Wheel Workshop

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USDE/PDE DISCLAIMER

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"The Writing Wheel"

Exercises


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## Journal Exercises

Journals serve as an excellent icebreaking activity for the beginning writer. This nonthreatening, free-writing approach creates writers out of highly resistant participants. Once students begin this daily 10 minute writing routine, they often surprise even themselves.

## Introduction to Journal Writing

"The value of keeping a journal is that we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves."

Thoreau

Why do a journal?

Self awareness and discovery of self and world around me.
Self expression and discovery of one's own point of view.
Growth and seeing growth.
Finding direction.
Development of one's inner life.

What a journal isn't: a diary, English lessons, for publication.

How (some practical points)

Notebook - own style
Dates (important)
Writings, drawings, clippings, letters

Some tips on approach:

1) Describe rather than judge - yourself - others
2) Write without analyzing or interpreting
3) Use personal point of view
4) Write freely, not being concerned about spelling, grammar, punctuation
5) Find a focus - a mind, emotion, image, event (your response to it), memory, plans, relationship, dream, meditation, questions, reflection on a saying,poem, etc., hopes
6) If you are stuck simply begin - write about your present feeling of being stuck.
7) Have fun!

Getting started:

1. Experimenting with what is "my time and place" for journal-keeping:

   a. Try out different times if you feel you do not already have a time: early morning, after first chores are finished, just before lunch, lunch break, just before school is out, right after work, before dinner, after dishes are done, just before retiring, other. (Don't pre-judge unless you have already established a rhythm for journal work - give different times a try.)

   b. Try out different places: your own room, a favorite spot in the house, at your office desk, sitting up in bed, etc.

2. Content: Noticing

N.B. DO NOT LIVE THE DAY FOR YOUR JOURNAL WRITING - that practice makes you too self-conscious and you lose the spontaneity of living. Writing in the journal is not the END of living ....rather the end of journal writing is richer living.

Some questions you might ask yourself after you have settled down and relaxed:

a. How was my day? (general)
b. What did I notice through my senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste that I want to record?
c. What can I now notice about my feelings today: physical feelings; emotional: joy, anger, resentment, content, etc.
d. What were my concerns today - what occupied my thoughts? practicals like what to buy at the store? what to do next week? hopes, dreams, etc.
e. Notice your relationships with others: things...animals, persons. BE VERY SPECIFIC...BE AS OBJECTIVE AS POSSIBLE...
f. Notice what your "mood" or "mood swings" were.
g. Simply write about what's going on <u>as</u> you write.

As the week progresses, you may find yourself focusing your attention on one area rather than another. Let your interest be your guide. You may find that there are some things you never notice and you may want to begin to notice - not HOWEVER FOR THE SAKE OF THE JOURNAL - but for the sake of the noticing itself.

Adapted from: Maureen Ambrose, <u>Venturing Forth</u>.

## Directed Journal Entries

## Exercises

Directed journal entries bridge the gap from free writing to the more structured approach of the writing process. One or two suggested topics are given as an assignment for each workshop.

## Suggested Topics for Directed Journal Entry

1. Write something about yourself; specifically, name one special quality that you are particularly proud of and would like to share with someone else.

2. Express your feelings toward writing. How do you feel about writing?

3. What would a perfect day be like for you? How would you spend that day? Where would you go? With whom would you share your perfect day? How does this perfect day differ from the days you now spend?

4. Think about the things you are really sure about - <u>really</u> sure about! On which you can <u>always</u> depend? What <u>never</u> changes?

5. What's the best age to be? I'm now ____ and it's much better (or isn't much better) than being a teenager.

6. You've had a full life of good experiences, but you've had a few bad experiences, too. Bad experiences are just as important for helping you cope with life as the good experiences. How can a bad life experience help you? What do you ultimately learn from that experience?

7. Write about <u>one</u> thing in your life for which you are particularly thankful.

8. Name one thing you accomplished today of which you are especially proud.

9. If you could, what would you like to change about the day you had today? How would that change have made your day better?

10. Describe something positive you did for someone or something positive you said to someone that made his/her day better or made him/her feel better.

11. Make a list of your most important goals for the next 6 months and right next to each one, write several sentences describing the benefit (or "payoff") for you when you finally reach or achieve each of those goals.

12. Make a list of 5 necessary but unpleasant tasks you have been "putting off." Then for each task, write several sentences telling why your tasks have not been completed.

13. You are a guidance counsellor in your school district's high school. A 17 year old junior comes to you with all the "right" reasons for dropping out of high school. He is adamant that you can say absolutely nothing that will change his mind. What <u>do</u> you say to this young man? How can you persuade him to at least <u>think</u> about staying in school?

14. Why do you want your GED?

15. You want some privacy - you want to be left alone for awhile. How would you tell 3 different persons that message? What could you say to each of these persons to ask for that needed privacy?

16. Direct your writing to one particular person and address any 2 of the following situations:

    -What's on your mind?
    -Thank you for what you've done for me.
    -Would you do me a favor?
    -You owe me some money.

17. Discuss the value of an education.

18. Write about a specific time you remember being alone.

19. Write a special time you first learned to do something.

20. Write about a time you remember being the center of attention.

21. Write about a time you were in charge.

22. Write about a specific time you remember being sad.

23. What are your personal goals for the future? Your hopes? Your dreams?

24. Describe a scene from your window.

25. Why did you decide to participate in the Writing Workshop? What do you ultimately hope to gain from this writing experience?

26. Write about any area in which you have knowledge or expertise. Suggested areas you may want to explore are hobbies, interests, or jobs.

Power Verbs

The purpose of these exercises is to improve the use of specific descriptive verbs in student writing. Often students find their own writing to be boring. Verb choice differentiates between dull writing and a vital, interesting piece.

The verbs in the following paragraphs are repeatedly overused and therefore make writing dull, uninteresting, and lifeless. When used in sentences, they do not give the reader specific detail. Rewrite each of the following paragraphs using more descriptive and more interesting verbs. Try to replace weak verbs with strong, descriptive ones.

> The guard left his feet. He cocked his arm back and let the ball go. A hand shot up. A referee's whistle cracked the air, ending play. The ball sailed through the hoop.

> The guard swiftly left his feet. Urgently he cocked his arm back and quickly let the ball go. Suddenly, a hand shot up. The referee's whistle loudly cracked the air ending play. The ball sailed gracefully through the hoop.

---

Talk

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| converse | chat | gab | speak |
| address | confer | utter | express |
| gossip | discuss | | |

> As they waited in line for the movie, people spent their time talking. Women from the neighborhood talked about who was seeing whom and what was on TV that night. Young children talked noisily to each other, while the older men quietly talked. A policeman talked about politics with a newspaper reporter.

---

> Last night I turned my television set to the news. It was time for the weather report. A weatherman was doing the report this time. He said a blizzard was expected. Our city would get snow? I couldn't believe it. We have already had a winter. Next year I'm moving to Florida.

Adapted from: Gail Shea, The Write Stuff-Shaping Sentences.

NARRATION: Writing About Action

Narration is writing about action. The action may be slow, covering many years, or it may be swift. The challenge of writing good narration is to give the reader the sense of action, to use specific details that make the action spring to life. Good narration also makes use of strong verbs. "Sugar Ray hit his sparring partner" is a dull sentence because the verb hit is vague. "Sugar Ray jabbed at his sparring partner" or "Sugar Ray walloped his sparring partner" are more vivid sentences because the verbs are stronger and more specific.

Exercise 1

In the space provided, rewrite the following sentences, replacing the underlined verb or verb phrase with a more vivid one. You may add whatever details you wish to make each sentence more interesting.

EXAMPLE Jose sang in the shower.
Jose warbled in the shower.

1. Laurie looked at the strange insect.

_____

2. The wind blew gently over the water.

_____

3. Calvin spoke to the umpire.

_____

4. Maudine hastily wrote down the address.

_____

5. The horse ran across the meadow.

_____

6. The rain came down.

_____

7. The dog objected when it was chained up.

_____

8. The room was loud with voices.

_____

9. Corettea laughed at Leon's joke.

_____

10. Nicki set the book down angrily.

_____

Adapted from: Sally Borengasser, English Writing and Language Skills.

## Writing Simple Sentences

Examples follow of exercises to improve sentence writing. Areas of emphasis are: run ons, fragments, syntax, active voice, concrete language, sensory descriptions.

## Writing the Simple Sentence

Here are five basic rules for better sentences:

1. There should be only one idea to a sentence.
2. The word arrangement, or syntax, must be correct.
3. Use active voice instead of passive.
4. Be specific rather than general.
5. Create interest.

## Exercises

1. Break up the following sentences into single-idea sentences:

   a. When millions of people are starving in the world it seems inappropriate to send mining engineers to underdeveloped countries to seek copper deposits when these nations have asked for soil experts and have also requested funds to establish power plants and transportation systems.

   b. After the train was late four days in a row, Bryant decided to commute by car and he also considered moving his business to the suburbs so he could avoid commuting entirely and spend more time with his family, which hadn't had a vacation together in five years.

   c. The high school senior who has sent out college applications often becomes quite nervous in late March because he knows the admission or rejection notices comes in April and he begins wondering if he will get into the school of his choice or get his second or third choices or be turned down by all of them.

2. Rearrange the syntax in these sentences to make them more understandable:

   a. Most people have no idea of where it comes from who use penicillin.

   b. His luggage was in his stateroom for which he needed three porters.

   c. Ambling along the old trail, the Indian relics were half buried in the sand when he first saw them.

   d. She was perched on a high stool with a regal air.

   e. The judge warned he would clear the courtroom if there were any demonstrations before he advised the defendant of his rights.

   f. Walking along Front Street, she saw the huge ocean liner "Queen Elizabeth II."

3. Put the sentences below into active voice:

   a. The accident in which three people were injured was caused by a collision of two cars.

   b. The hurricane was predicted by the weather bureau twenty-four hours in advance.

   c. The part was taken by Janice after the girl who was first given the role was hospitalized with bronchitis.

   d. The final touchdown was scored by Ballinger in the last ten seconds of the game.

   e. The comedy was performed by the Community Players before five hundred people.

   f. An accident in which three teenagers were hurt occurred when a car crossed the dividing strip and struck their auto.

   g. The rescue ship was sighted by the ten survivors early in the afternoon.

4. Make the following sentences more concrete:

   a. The diamond was quite large.

   b. He lived in a house somewhere in the middle of town.

   c. Afternoon television programs are generally of one kind.

   d. It was a rather nice day.

   e. Jim has lots of personality.

   f. The book is about World War II.

   g. Some jobs are easy to get.

   h. More and more people are using drugs.

i. When he was in college he went out for sports.

j. The burglars stole quite a bit from the house.

5. Rewrite these sentences to make them more interesting:

a. The waitress brought Eric his order.

b. Dr. Roger Merrit spoke last night to the PTA.

c. Karate is an interesting sport for different reasons.

Adapted from: M.L. Stein, How to Write Plain English.

Description: Using Sense Details and Specific Details

Vivid writing appeals to the reader's senses. Such writing uses specific details to re-create sights, sounds, tastes, smells and textures. Vague writing that lacks details results in dull reading. Consider the following sentences:

The cat came into the yard.

The tiger cat crept through the shadows, his green eyes narrowed, his ears tilted toward the chirps of the young mockingbirds in the old peach tree.

The cat in the second sentence is a much more real (and nasty) fellow than the cat of the first sentence. The specific details help the reader to see the tiger cat, the shadows, the old tree, and to hear the sounds of the young birds.

EXERCISE

Rewrite each of the following sentences in the space provided. Add specific details that appeal to the senses.

EXAMPLE The video arcade was noisy.
The video arcade throbbed with eerie beeps, squeaks, buzzes, crashes, and explosions, and a rainbow of lights flickered and pulsed from the screens.

1. The garbage smelled terrible.

_____

_____

2. Wet spaghetti and peeled grapes feel weird.

_____

_____

3. The school cafeteria smells strange.

_____

_____

4. A dog stood on the corner.

_____

_____

5. The traffic was deafening.

_____

_____

6. The orange tasted good.

_____

_____

7. The house was old.

_____

_____

8. I felt pain as I hit the gravel driveway.

_____

_____

9. I have a craving for something good to eat.

_____

_____

10. The band has an unusual sound.

_____

_____

Adapted from: Sally Borengasser, English Writing and Language Skills Workbook.

## Adding Information to Sentences

The following story needs to be rewritten. The original author used too many short sentences and not nearly enough descriptive adjectives and verbs. Rewrite this story by joining subjects and other nouns, connecting actions, adding descriptive adjectives and verbs, and putting together groups of words showing when, where, or how into the same sentence.

### A HIDDEN TREASURE

I was stacking old magazines. I was stacking them in my uncle's basement. Suddenly I noticed something strange. It was a huge captain's trunk. I pushed. I pulled. I finally turned the trunk around. Inside was an Indian blanket. Inside there was some pottery. Inside there was a long rolled-up paper.

I spread the paper. I spread it on the floor. It was a drawing of an old Indian couple. It was a drawing of the couple on a wooden porch. Their faces stared back at me. The man's face was lined. It was wrinkled. He was frowning. He was staring straight ahead. The woman's face was softer. It was less wrinkled. It was more cheerful.

They wore work clothes. The man's overalls were baggy. They were too long for him. He wore a belt. He wore a work shirt. He wore a bandana too. He had a cowboy hat. He had it on his head. He held a tobacco pouch. He held it in his hand. The woman wore a long dress. She wore an apron. The wind had blown the apron. She was holding it with her hands. She was holding it down. The woman's dress was hooked with safety pins. She wore a cap. She wore earrings. She wore laced boots.

There was a screen door behind the couple. There was a window. There were two signs too. They must have been standing in front of a store or trading post.

Who could have drawn this picture? It was a mystery. I took it home. I framed it. I sold it to an art gallery.

*I was stacking old magazines in my uncle's basement.*

Adapted from: Gail Shea, The Write Stuff-Shaping Sentences.

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Sentence Completion

Paragraph Building

Exercises

The purpose of these exercises is to build skills in sentence refinement and paragraph structure. The exercises serve as a good building block for writing process instruction.

Define each of the following terms by example.

1. Communism

2. A medium-rare steak

3. A cry for help

4. A good movie

5. A healthy sport

6. An impossible task

7. A quiet moment

8. Preparing a proper meal

9. Capitalism

10. The Writing Wheel

Here is a list of the terms that you have already defined by example. NOW define each term by telling what it is NOT. Remember to eliminate negative points so that your reader will be left with something he knows and can recognize.

1. Communism is not

2. A medium-rare steak is not

3. A cry for help is not

4. A good movie is not

5. A healthy sport is not

6. An impossible task is not

7. A quiet moment is not

8. Preparing a proper meal is not

9. Capitalism is not

10. "The Writing Wheel" is not

Complete the following definitions. Try to write each definition as clearly as possible. Remember, your goal is to communicate a completely clear message. Rewrite your definition, if necessary, to attain that goal.

1. Love is a feeling that

2. Spanish is a language that

3. A parakeet is a bird that

4. Richard Burton is an actor who

5. Cocaine ("crack") is a drug that

6. Liability insurance is insurance that

7. "The Writing Wheel" is a workshop that

## Paragraph Building

After the definitions are finished (see preceding exercise) and each word group represents a complete sentence, those seven sentences are used as topic sentences for seven paragraphs that each student writes.

In an effort to produce well written, well structured paragraphs, one sentence containing a supporting detail will be added each week until a total of 4 supporting sentences are attached to the topic sentence. By adding one sentence at a time, the student writer has a firsthand look at how a paragraph is correctly structured by doing the actual structuring himself. He not only has the opportunity to make certain each supporting detail enhances the topic sentence, but he also has the chance to refresh his knowledge of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, grammar, and usage.

After the 4 supporting sentences are in place, adhering to all the rules of paragraph unity and coherence, the clincher sentence is added. This gives the student writer a chance to complete each of the paragraphs with a good, concrete clincher sentence. It is often so very easy for a writer to just stop writing, but it is not easy for a writer to end a paragraph with a sentence that actually concludes the paragraph. This technique strengthens and unifies the total writing process.

By building these entire paragraphs, one sentence at a time, from topic sentence to clincher sentence, the student writer should have a thorough understanding of the meaning and structure of the paragraph.

## Paragraph Development
## Exercises

For students who are new to writing, the paragraph seems to be a manageable and productive way to prepare them for longer writing experiences. A variety of exercises follow.

Select one of the following topics and write a sensory description of it.

1) an accident
2) the house where I live
3) a picturesque place
4) a fire
5) a park
6) a fascinating animal
7) a good place to work
8) a frightening event
9) a motorcycle (car)
10) an athlete

The following topics may be developed by comparison and contrast. Write a topic sentence for 1 and develop it into a paragraph (100-150 words) supplying the details needed to make the similarities or differences clear.

1. supermarkets and neighborhood groceries
2. Saturday and Monday
3. two magazines
4. people and machines
5. two kinds of music
6. two kinds of teachers

Look at the following topics for expository paragraphs. Decide if you would develop the topic with facts (F) or examples (E). Pick 2 topics.Write paragraphs of about 150 words each.

1. Qualities of a good baby sitter
2. The perfect highway
3. If I were a teacher
4. Household chores
5. How not to get lost in the woods
6. A typical vacation
7. You don't have to travel far to find adventure
8. Nicknames can be cruel
9. The best day of the week
10. The value of an education

Adapted from: John E. Warriner, English Grammar and Composition, Complete Course.

Self-Awareness/Self-Understanding

| Time | Feeling | Place | Contributing Factors |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8:00 | | | |
| 9:00 | | | |
| 10:00 | | | |
| 11:00 | | | |
| 12:00 | | | |
| 1:00 | | | |
| 2:00 | | | |
| 3:00 | | | |
| 4:00 | | | |
| 5:00 | | | |
| 6:00 | | | |
| 7:00 | | | |
| 8:00 | | | |
| 9:00 | | | |
| 10:00 | | | |

Getting In Touch With My Feelings

Take a few minutes and look closely and carefully at your daily log. Try to make some correlation (connection) between your feelings and the time of day and the place those feelings materialized. At this point you should be as subjective (within one's self or mind) as possible.

Now, "step back," become as objective (outside one's self or mind) as possible, and examine your daily log. It is within this objective framework that you are to write a 7-8 sentence paragraph describing the general mood of your day. Remember, good paragraph structure is a MUST: topic sentence, supporting details, and clincher (concluding) sentence. When your paragraph is finished, double check subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Variations

1. Writing to music: The entire time the student is writing, which should be approximately 20-30 minutes, background music can be played. The student should then try to get a focus on how the music influenced his mood while he was writing his paragraph. (It may not have had any influence at all.) Some of the things the student will want to consider are these: Did the music change the way you perceived your day? Did you have any concentration problems? Was it easier and more relaxing to write to the music or was it

more difficult? Did you find the music distracting? A discussion may follow the writing and can lead into another paragraph.

2. Sharing: Instead of having each student write about his or her own day, allow each student to share his daily log with another student. The person to whom the student gives his daily log will then write a 7-8 sentence paragraph describing the general mood of the day. This is often a very successful as well as enlightening exchange for each student. It gives the student the opportunity to "see" his day through the eyes of another person who is totally detached and objective. The best part of this technique is the sharing of the paragraphs after they have been written. This can prompt great discussion or can be a lead-in to the writing of another paragraph, perhaps on the topic: How do you now view the day you had? Do you see your day as any better or any worse than you originally thought?

## Life Skills

Topics covered in the Life Skills area of the Writing Wheel varied with the needs of each group. Exercises from list making and map reading were included at times. What was most desired by students was instruction in letter writing: business, cover, complaint, and thank you letters.

WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS: FORM

A business letter has six parts. The parts are labeled and explained in the example below:

| | |
|---|---|
| HEADING | 118 Elm Street<br>Pierce, Washington 98100<br>September 7, 1984 |
| INSIDE ADDRESS | Ms. Ursa Major<br>Bully Teddy Bear Company<br>503 Roosevelt Hill<br>Roughrider, Ohio 45555 |
| SALUTATION | Dear Ms. Major: |
| BODY | Enclosed is a check for $25.98. Please send me one "Giant Bully Teddy Bear," postpaid, as advertised in the August issue of Bear Lover's Bulletin. |
| CLOSING | Yours truly, |
| SIGNATURE | *Bert Bruin*<br>Bert Bruin |

EXERCISE

Using the proper form, write a business letter to the Ticket Chairman, Alpine Society, 225 Umlaut Street, Mount Warble, California 90099. Ask for two tickets @ $2.00 each for the Alpine Society Yodeling Contest on December 1st. You are enclosing $4.00 and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Use your address and today's date in the heading. Write your letter on a separate sheet of paper.

Adapted from: Sally Borengasser, English Writing and Language Skills.

1. THE HEADING

The heading has:

a. the writer's street address (number and name of street)
b. the writer's city and state
c. and the date (month, day, and year)

118 Elm Street
Pierce, Washington 98100
September 7, 1984

The only punctuation is a comma between the city and state, and a comma between the day and the year.

2. THE INSIDE ADDRESS

The inside address has:

a. the name of the company or person to receive the letter
b. the street address (number and name of street)
c. the city and state

Ms. Ursa Major
Bully Teddy Bear Company
503 Roosevelt Hill
Roughrider, Ohio 45555

The only punctuation mark is a comma between the city and state.

3. THE GREETING

The line under an inside address is called a greeting. The usual greetings are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Dear Miss Jones | |
| Dear Mr. Tarvin: | Dear Mrs. Skaggs: | Dear Sir: |
| Dear Ms. Rhein: | Gentlemen: | Dear Madam: |

A colon (:) follows the greeting, and all words are capitalized.

4. THE BODY OF THE LETTER

Indent each paragraph of the letter. Be clear, courteous, and brief.

5. THE CLOSING

The line above the signature is called the closing because it closes the letter. The following are frequently used:

Very truly yours, Very truly, Yours sincerely, Sincerely yours, Yours truly,

Only the first word is capitalized, and a comma is used at the end.

6. THE SIGNATURE

The signature is the name of the writer. Even if the rest of the letter is typed, the signature must be signed in ink.

Adapted from: John E. Warriner, English Workshop.

## Outline for a Cover Letter

Your Present Address
City, State  Zip Code
Date of Writing

Mr. John Doe
Title C
Company
Street Address
City, State  Zip Code

Dear Mr. Doe:

1st paragraph - Tell why you are writing: name the position, or field, or general occupation area about which you are asking. If you know of a specific job opening, mention it. When responding to an advertisement, be sure to include the name and date of the publication in which it was placed. If referred by a contact person, mention the fact and include the person's name in your opening sentence.

2nd paragraph - Mention one or two qualifications you think would be of greatest interest to the employer, slanting your remarks to his point of view. Tell why you are particularly interested in his company, location, or type of work. If you have had related experience, or specialized training, be sure to point it out.

3rd paragraph - Refer the reader to the enclosed resume, application, or the median which gives information concerning your qualifications.

4th paragraph - Close by making a specific request for an interview. Make sure your closing is not vague, but makes a specific action from the reader likely. Inform them that you will be getting in touch with him/her during the next week.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Type your name

Enclosure

## Outline for a Cover Letter

Your Present Address
City, State Zip Code
Date of Writing

Mr. John Doe
Title C
Company
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. Doe:

1st paragraph - Tell why you are writing: name the position, or field, or general occupation area about which you are asking. If you know of a specific job opening, mention it. When responding to an advertisement, be sure to include the name and date of the publication in which it was placed. If referred by a contact person, mention the fact and include the person's name in your opening sentence.

2nd paragraph - Mention one or two qualifications you think would be of greatest interest to the employer, slanting your remarks to his point of view. Tell why you are particularly interested in his company, location, or type of work. If you have had related experience, or specialized training, be sure to point it out.

3rd paragraph - Refer the reader to the enclosed resume, application, or the median which gives information concerning your qualifications.

4th paragraph - Close by making a specific request for an interview. Make sure your closing is not vague, but makes a specific action from the reader likely. Inform them that you will be getting in touch with him/her during the next week.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Type your name

Enclosure

## Some Final Notes on Letters

1. Letters should be typed and addressed to a specific person, including his or her proper title, if at all possible. If you don't have a name, call the company and ask to whom you should address a letter.

2. Follow a business letter format, including your return address and the inside address.

3. Use standard 8½" by 11" business paper. (No fancy stationery!)

4. If a letter of inquiry, ask if a vacancy is anticipated; if a letter of application, cite where you learned of the opening.

5. Personalize your letter to stimulate interest in you as a candidate but keep your letter businesslike.

6. Emphasize the contribution you can make to the organization in question, but do not repeat the contents of your resume.

7. Refer to your resume and/or application as an attached enclosure.

8. Ask for an application.

9. Ask for an interview. Try to call within two days of your letter's arrival to arrange for an interview. If too much more time is allowed to elapse, your letter and where they put it may be forgotten.

10. Thank the individual for his/her consideration.

11. Keep a copy of the letter for future reference.

12. Accentuate the positive. Show why you are a good candidate for the position, and be enthusiastic. Most important, be yourself..... your best self.

13. Remember.....follow-up is the name of the game. Show an employer you are really interested with follow-up phone calls and/or letters.

Adapted from: Richard Lathrop, Who's Hiring Who.

WRITING A THANK-YOU LETTER FOR AN INTERVIEW

It is a good practice to follow up an employment interview with a thank-you letter. A letter keeps your name in the mind of the interviewer and is another chance to persuade the company to hire you.

Guidelines for Writing a Thank-You Letter for a Job Interview

1. Follow the format for a business letter.
2. Begin by thanking the person for the interview.
3. State specific reasons why you want to work for the company and why you would make a good employee.
4. End by thanking the interviewer again.

Mercedes applied for a job as a bookkeeper for the Centertown Clinic. Mercedes had worked as a bookeeper before her children were born, and she had kept up her skills by managing the family's finances. After the interview, Mercedes wrote a thank-you letter. She followed the guidelines listed above.

MODEL

Thank You Letter For Job Interview

9333 S. Elkhart Ave.
Portage, IN 47314
February 12, 1986

Ms. Mary Osterworth
Administrative Manager
Centertown Clinic
1825 N. Broad St.
Portage, IN 47305

Dear Ms. Osterworth:

Thank you for considering me for the job as bookkeeper for Centertown Clinic. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you. Centertown Clinic has a good reputation in Portage, and I would be proud to join your staff.

I am glad you are looking for a person who cares about patients as well as figures. For that reason, I feel that I would do the job well and would enjoy it very much. I am skilled in all areas of bookkeeping but I care a lot about people. I also think my Spanish would be helpful with Centertown's Hispanic patients.

Again, thank you for interviewing me for the job. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

*Mercedes Hunter*

Mercedes Hunter

Adapted from: Karin Evans, The Write Stuff, Life Skills Writing.

Follow-up letter - First Interview

Dear_____,

My visit to your organization proved to be an enlightening and rewarding experience. I want to express my appreciation for your very complete responses to my questions and for the information you shared with me. It really helped me objectively evaluate your opportunity in light of my career goals.

I feel confident that I can make a solid contribution to your organization and look forward to the opportunity to demonstrate my ability to produce the results you seek.

Again, thank you for your time and gracious hospitality.

Sincerely,

_____

Dear _____,

My purpose in writing is to express my appreciation for the additional time you provided during our recent interview and for the complete tour of your facility.

I am excited about the opportunity you have available and feel confident that my skills and experience would allow me to make significant contributions to your organization.

I look forward to the second interview on Tuesday, July 27th, and the opportunity to meet other professionals within_____Corporation.

Again, thank you, and see you Tuesday.

Sincerely,

_____

Follow-up letter - Final Interview

Dear_____,

Just a short note to express my appreciation for the courtesy you have extended me during recent weeks. You certainly have made me feel welcome and I look forward to our future association. As I have indicated, I hope to join your organization and demonstrate my ability to produce the results you seek.

Sincerely,

_____

## The Letter of Complaint

There are many times you have to write a letter of complaint. You may have to write to a store to get a refund. Or maybe you have sent away for something, but it doesn't arrive after a very long wait, or the wrong product arrives in its place. You will have to write to the company and ask for the correct product. For a third example, you might want to complain to a public official about a community problem. When you write a letter of complaint, remember to do the following:

1. First, explain the problem.

2. Second, include all the information that's needed so the company can act on your problem. This includes:

| | |
|---|---|
| -Date of the sale | -Copies of receipts |
| -Dates of any discussions | -The price of the product |
| -Names of salespeople | -Details about the problem |

3. Third, explain what action you want.

Be sure to remember these, too:

-Be polite. Don't insult people, even if you are very angry.
-Plan what you are going to write. Before you write the letter, think of all the things you want to say. Remember to write them in the order that they happened. You can write some of these ideas down before you actually start to write the letter.
-Be brief. Explain the problem. Include all details, and tell what you want. But don't go on and on.
-Use acceptable business letter form.
-Check spelling, capitalization, usage, and grammar.
-Be neat.

Adapted from: Laurie E. Rozakis, Put It In Writing Activity Book 1.

TRY IT OUT!

For the letter of complaint that follows, select the verbs that you think fit best. Then, write them in the correct form. Place your answers in the space provided.

89 Whitmore Street
San Francisco, California 98505
February 4, 198_

Ms. Jennifer Morgan
Marketing Director
The Raincoat Factory
Box 78
Murray Hill Station, New York 11748

Dear Ms. Morgan:

On January 3, I____1____ a model G-16 raincoat you____2____ on television. I ____3____ a check for the total amount, $35.00. On February 3, I ____4____ a rainhat and an umbrella, but no coat. I never ordered a rainhat or an umbrella. Please ____5____ me the raincoat I ordered or a full refund of my money. What should I do with the rainhat and umbrella?

Yours very truly,

Michael Green

1._____ 3._____ 5._____
2._____ 4._____

Adapted from: Laurie E. Rozakis, Put It In Writing Activity Book 1.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

On March 4, you bought a pair of boots from The Leather Warehouse, 17 River Drive, Oceanside, Texas 11859. Two days later, the heel broke off the right boot. You have only worn them twice. You went back to the store, but the manager, Mr. James Rosten, refused to give you a refund or a new pair of boots. You have decided to write to the Vice President, Ms. Sarah Fink, to ask for a full refund.

1. Write two sentences that tell what happened. Use words that show you are writing about things that happened past.

2. Write two sentences that explain what the store manager claims. Use words that show you are writing about what happened in the present.

3. Write two sentences about what you want done. Use words that show you are writing about the future.

Adapted from: Laurie E. Rozakis, Put It In Writing Activity Book 1.

## The Writing Process

Exercises for the Writing Process include the introduction of transitional expressions, outlining, rough drafts, revision and editing. Suggested topics for a final workshop composition are included.

## THE WRITING PROCESS

### The Different Stages of the Writing Process

| INCUBATION | PREWRITING (finding a topic; generating ideas; getting started; thinking on paper) | FIRST DRAFTS (rough or slop drafts) | REVISING/ REWRITING | FINISHED DRAFT PROOFREADING EDITING |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -interpretative note-taking<br>-class discussion<br>-small group talk about topic<br>-lists/notes/jottings<br>-outlines<br>-generating questions<br>-timed or free writing<br>-talking ideas into a tape recorder<br>-journals<br>-logs<br>-"reaction" papers<br>-short responses to questions<br>-debates<br>-panels | -journals<br>-logs<br>-reaction papers<br>-short in-class pieces | -conferences with peers<br>-conferences with teacher<br>-revising worksheets<br>-reading piece aloud<br>-tutoring in Writing Center | -concern here with/<br>-grammar<br>-punctuation<br>-spelling<br>-sentence structure |

Not all writing has to go to the final stage.

It's important in these stages <u>not</u> to be too concerned with spelling/ grammar/punctuation.

Adapted from: George E. Rutledge, <u>Write for Life Program</u>.

Transitional Expressions

In addition to the repetition of key words and the use of pronouns, the selection of the correct transitional word or connective often proves useful in expressing the relationship of ideas. These connectives can be arranged according to the type of relationship they show.

(1) Connectives that link similar ideas (comparisons):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| again | for example | in the same manner (way) | similarly |
| also | for instance | likewise | such as |
| and | furthermore | moreover | that is |
| another | in addition | namely | to illustrate |
| besides | in a like manner | of course | too |

(2) Connectives that link dissimilar, contradictory, contrasting, or opposite ideas:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| although | however | on the other hand |
| as if | in spite of | otherwise |
| at the same time | instead | provided that |
| but | nevertheless | still |
| conversely | on the contrary | yet |
| despite | | |
| even if | | |

(3) Connectives that show cause, purpose, result, or conclusion:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| accordingly | for this reason | then |
| as | hence | therefore |
| as a result | if | thus |
| because | since | unless |
| consequently | so | when |
| for | | |

(4) Connectives that show time or place (position):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| above | at the present time | first | presently |
| across | before | here | thereafter |
| after | behind | later | thereupon |
| afterward | below | meanwhile | until |
| around | beyond | next | where |
| as soon as | eventually | next to | while |
| at once | finally | now | |

(5) Connectives that show summary:

| | |
|---|---|
| finally | on the whole |
| in this way | to conclude |
| in conclusion | to sum up |

# WRITING OUTLINES

Write an outline using the brainstorm list below.

-Group the ideas according to what they have in common and get rid of irrelevant ideas.
-Draw a "skeleton outline."
The unifying statement is given to you.
-Decide on a heading or name for each group of ideas and write a topic sentence based on the heading. Put it in its place on the outline.
-Then fill in your ideas for supporting sentences.

UNIFYING STATEMENT: It's unfair that trash is collected so infrequently in this community.

it's depressing to look at

no garbage in front of mayor's house

lots of potholes in street

it makes us look like slobs

people could slip on litter and hurt themselves

bad for the environment

we want to be proud of street's appearance

garbage pickup is better in Salem Heights

crime problem is getting worse

kids get sick from playing near trash

wealthy suburbs are spotless

apartments here have more roaches due to trash

Adapted from: Ellen Carley Frechette, The Write Stuff, Test and Essay Writing.

## Outlining the Composition of Several Paragraphs Using a Standard Outline Form

A composition of several paragraphs is governed by the same principals that are used to organize a single paragraph. While the single paragraph is built around the topic sentence, the longer composition develops from the topic paragraph or the first paragraph. The paragraphs that follow present the supporting ideas for the topic paragraph.

A longer composition is planned in the same way as a single paragraph. Begin by writing down a central idea. Then list all the ideas to be included. Discard any or all ideas that are unimportant or unsupportive. Finally, make a careful outline. The outline is important. It helps to show the relationship of supporting ideas to the main ideas.

Rules for a Standard Outline Form (Harvard System of Notation)

1. Place the title above the outline
2. Use Roman numerals for each main topic (each central idea)
3. Use letters and numbers for sub-topics according to the following arrangement:

I.
- A.
- B.
  - 1.
  - 2.
    - a.
    - b.
      - (1)
      - (2)
        - (a)
        - (b)

II.

4. All letters or numbers should come directly under one another in a vertical line.

5. Begin each topic with a capital letter. Do not capitalize any other words in a topic unless they are always capitalized.

CORRECT - Recent changes in American policy

INCORRECT - Recent changes in American Policy

6. Under each topic, there must be at least 2 or more sub-topics or NONE at all. Never use 1 sub-topic.

7. Keep the outline as parallel as possible. If the outline is a topical outline, use that format throughout the entire outline. (Same rule applies if the outline is a sentence outline) Sub-topics should also be parallel in form. If the first sub-topic is a single noun, the others should be nouns; if the first sub-topic is a phrase, the others should be phrases of the same kind.

8. Once the outline is prepared, the writing may begin. If the plan of the composition becomes altered, change the outline. The outline is not final until the composition has been completed. The important point is that the composition must follow a logical outline. If it does, the result will be a clear, complete final product.

---

EXERCISE A. Rewrite the following outline in the spaces provided at the right. Correct all technical errors in numbering, parallel form, capitalization, lone sub-topics, arrangement, etc.

A Birthday Party

I. The Guests .....
A. Typical Appearance .....
B. Actions that are typical .....
II. The refreshments .....
a. The beverages that are served .....
B. What food is served .....
III. The entertainment .....
1. Games that are played .....
2. Dancing .....
A. records .....
3. Singing songs .....

Adapted from: John E. Warriner, English Workshop.

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EXERCISE B. Using the spaces provided at the right, arrange the following list of topics in a correctly written outline. The title is included in the list.

| | |
|---|---|
| clubs | (Title)..... |
| musical organizations | ..... |
| Student Council | ..... |
| Drama Club | ..... |
| band | ..... |
| school activities | ..... |
| student government groups | ..... |
| newspaper | ..... |
| orchestra | ..... |
| publications | ..... |
| Student Court | ..... |
| homeroom committee | ..... |
| yearbook | ..... |
| Photography Club | ..... |
| magazine | ..... |
| choral groups | ..... |
| Hobby Club | ..... |

## Suggested Topics

1. Pressures that force conformity/nonconformists are rarely popular
2. Beliefs changed by experience
3. If I could do it again - 1986
4. My life one year from now
5. What is success?
6. A significant news event of the past week
7. The importance of a free press
8. My encounters w/prejudice
9. The influence of the setting in a novel
10. Lengthening the Life Span
11. The Challenger - Human factors in space travel
12. Living on a budget

## Additional Handouts

The following handouts in addition to the preceding exercises were useful to our participants.

## THE QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING

1. Meaning

   There must be content in an effective piece of writing. It must add up to something. This is the most important element in good writing, but although it must be listed first it is often discovered last through the process of writing.

2. Authority

   Good writing is filled with specific, accurate, honest information. The reader is persuaded through authoritative information that the writer knows the subject.

3. Voice

   Good writing is marked by an individual voice. The writer's voice may be the most significant element in distinguishing memorable writing from good writing.

4. Development

   The writer satisfies the reader's hunger for information. The beginning writer almost always overestimates the reader's hunger for language and underestimates the reader's hunger for information.

5. Design

   A good piece of writing is elegant in the mathematical sense. It has form, structure, order, focus, coherence. It gives the reader a sense of completeness.

6. Clarity

   Good writing is marked by a simplicity which is appropriate to the subject. The writer has searched for and found the right word, the effective verb, the clarifying phrase. The writer has removed writer so that the reader sees through the writer's style to the subject, which is clarified and simplified.

It is my belief that these qualities are the same for poetry and fiction as well as non-fiction.

Adapted from: George E. Rutledge, Write for Life Program.

## Checklist for Proofreading

1. The paper is carefully written or typed and is not marred by inkblots, messy smudges, or crossed-out words.

2. Sentence structure is accurate. There are no fragments or run-on sentences. Punctuation is used correctly to link compound sentences.

3. Singular verbs are used with singular subjects, and plural verbs with plural subjects.

4. All pronouns have clear antecedents. Plural pronouns are used to refer to plural nouns, and singular pronouns are used with singular nouns.

5. Pronouns are the correct subject or object form.

6. Singular pronouns such as either, each, anybody, everybody, or nobody are used with singular verbs.

7. The writer uses verb tense consistently and accurately.

8. The writer avoids unnecessary shifts in pronouns, such as I to you, or they to you.

9. Confusing verbs such as lie/lay, sit/set, leave/let are used correctly.

10. The endings -s, -'s, -ing, or -ed are used correctly with nouns and verbs.

11. Participial phrases, prepositional phrases, and dependent clauses are clearly attached to the words they modify, to avoid misunderstanding.

12. Capitalization is used correctly at the beginning of sentences and with proper nouns and adjectives.

13. Each word is spelled correctly.

14. Punctuation is used correctly throughout the writing.

15. Contractions such as they're, it's, or you're are not confused with possessive pronouns.

16. Confusing words such as farther/further, fewer/less or sound-alikes such as desert/dessert, since/sense are used and spelled correctly.

17. Dialogue is punctuated and capitalized correctly.

18. Slang and other words or phrases not a part of Edited Standard English are used only when they are appropriate.

Adapted from: Sally Borengasser, English Writing and Language Skills.

The Writing Wheel

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The Board of Directors of Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11 has designated Jacqueline M. Vocke as the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11 Equal Opportunity Employment Coordinator to insure compliance that the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit does not discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race, color, or national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504, and Title IV.

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msa
6/9/87



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